[Translation]

International Telegraph Office

3674. PROF. RITA VERMA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of personnel required for smooth functioning of International Telegraph Office, New Delhi;

(b) whether this office has adequate number of personnel to work in all the three shifts for operating FAX; and

(c) if not, whether the Government propose to conduct a study and posts requisite number of employees for its smooth functioning?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The number of personnel required for smooth functioning of International Telegraph Office, New Delhi is 56.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir. Required staff is already posted.

NTPC, Gujarat

3675. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the NTPC Plants in Gujarat have not been making full utilisation of their capacity due to short supply of gas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the efforts being made by the Union Government for adequate supply of gas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) Kawas (645 MW) and Gandhar (648 MW) combined cycle gas based power projects of National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) in Gujarat are not operating at the optimum level because of shortage of gas supply. These power stations have been accorded gas linkage at a PLF of about 62% whereas these are capable of generating at higher load factors.

(c) While constantly pursuing with the relevant authorities for higher gas availability, gas turbines of the Kawas project have also been modified to run on dual fuel. Gas turbines at Gandhar are also being taken up for similar modifications.

[English]

Rationalisation of Power Tariff

3676. SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPINH GAEKWAD: SHRI P. KODANDA RAMAIAH :

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Electricity Boards and Undertakings have been asked to rationalise and raise power tariffs with a view to raise resources enough to provide for 40 thousand Mega Watt additional power capacity during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether some of the Electricity Boards and authorities have considerably increased the tariffs recently while others are announcing and implementing populist schemes including free distribution of power to different sections of the society; and

(d) if so, the steps are being taken to rationalise the tariff structure in such a way as to bring about measure of equity and uniformity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) and (b) The Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power (CMNPP), finalised in the meetings of Chief Ministers held on 16th October and 3rd December, 1996, *inter-alia*, has recommended that determination of retail tariffs including wheeling charges etc. will be decided by State Electricity Regulatory Commission, which will ensure a minimum overall 3% rate of return to each utility with immediate effect. The Ninth Five Year Plan is under finalisation by the Planning Commission. Central Government is actively pursuing with the States for early implementation of CMNPP.

(c) During the year 1996-97, State Electricity Boards of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Meghalaya & Electricity Department of Goa have carried out upward revision in the tariff. The free electricity to Agriculture Sector is being supplied to Tamil Nadu. Some State Governments also declare, from time to time free/concessional agricultural tariff to small farmers using 5 HP pump sets.

(d) As per the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948, State Electricity Boards/State Governments are empowered to fix the electricity tariff. During the Chief Ministers Conference it was also agreed that the tariff for agricultural sector will not be less than 50 paise/Kwh to be brought to 50% of the average cost in not more than 3 years.